

many recover and are restored to usefulness when adequate treatment is given. Then, too, some healthy physicians and nurses cannot serve long and maintain their mental poise in some of these so-called hospitals that give such care to patients as is possible at a cost of a few cents a day.

The demands and criticisms of whole-minded patients and their friends in other classes of hospitals exert a powerful influence toward the constant improvement of these hospitals. There is no such chance in hospitals for those whose minds are darkened and where visiting periods are so rigidly controlled. This should make us all the more solicitous for the welfare of the benighted patients. Every known possibility for improvement in the mental and physical condition of each of these patients should be patiently exhausted before they are treated as derelicts.

Efficient "hospital" care of the mentally irresponsible is one thing and the "custodial" care of the hopelessly demented is another and much less expensive service. Both are necessary. No government should have the right to place patients in the "custodial care" class until they have been carefully studied by staffs of competent physicians under real hospital conditions and all hope of their betterment under any circumstances has been given up.

We do not believe that the people of California desire or, if they knew, would tolerate less than we have indicated for their fellow citizens who are unable to speak for themselves. Intelligent persons will very well know that adequate hospital and professional service is not, and cannot be, rendered at a cost of a fraction of a dollar a day.

The facts as to what is being done and what is not being done are matters of record, but until such time as some powerful and active civic organization becomes interested in the question, publication of additional facts would serve no useful constructive purpose.

WHY "POSITIVE HEALTH"?

The double negative has long been subjected to the attacks of grammarians for the very simple reason that its meaning is exactly the opposite of that intended. The double positive is not in such ill-repute because it is seldom used and only Shakespeare, with his "most unkindest cut," is permitted to use the double superlative without censure, if not without comment.

There is a double positive recently come into common usage by certain health workers, however, that ought to be consigned to the graveyard of things-that-never-should-have-been, and that is the phrase "positive health." Surely, disease in itself is negative and, consequently, health must be positive. Why paint the lily?

Some American medical journals are guilty of using this deplorable term, and at the recent International Health Education Conference in San Francisco it was lipped with great frequency. Of course, it is understood that the phrase is intended to cover generalities, but when we have so many words with which to be specific and so many health subjects that require exactness, why should we

positive the positive so glibly and so meaninglessly?

Health education is vastly more than the imparting of mere generalities. Pupils must receive their education in health by means of simple, direct statement of fact. The teacher who can talk only in vague generalities cannot teach. The public, furthermore, wants and will get its health information in definite terms. Leaders in the advance of the public health movement of today must know exactly the message that they have to give, and they must know how to present it in clear, simple, direct, plain Anglo-Saxon. Heavier pressure on the positive alone will never eliminate the negative, and ostrich-like methods in not recognizing disease will never result in the promotion of the public health.

COLORADO'S "MATERNITY LAW"

Colorado has a new "Maternity Law." It has some interesting features. Provisions are made for the expectant mother during the last six months of her pregnancy. The infant's welfare is assured during its first six months after birth. The operation of the law is in the hands of the Children's Court, over which Judge Ben Lindsay presides. Either the mother or friends may make application for relief, which includes all varieties, from cash to medical and hospital care. All proceedings are conducted in the most confidential manner. Physicians and hospitals and nurses are paid for their services.

Unmarried mothers are given the same confidential care as others, including loss of identity in maternity hospitals. Infants of unmarried mothers will be placed in homes upon request. The law also gives the court wide authority in dealing with the father responsible for an illegitimate child.

It is claimed for this law that it requires no enlargement of government machinery and that its benefits are easily and confidentially available without red tape to any mother unable to pay the necessary costs of adequate assistance.

The power of the court to require fathers to accept financial and other responsibility for their illegal children is expected to reduce the cost of operating this law to the taxpayers.

This all sounds too good to be true.

PERSONAL PUFFERY

No conscientious physician can examine large press-clipping services and read the great number of letters that pour into the office of any medical organization without becoming gravely concerned over the tendencies of so-called "education of the public" in medical subjects. The movement for Medical and Public Health Education for the Public is as old as medicine itself. There are on file in libraries plenty of resolutions and discourses upon it dating back through the centuries. We have recently read some that might be republished today, as new and as appropriate as they were when originally presented centuries ago.

Of course the public should be informed—as far as they are capable of comprehending without medical education—upon all subjects pertaining to

better health. A review of what has been, and what is being, produced along this line indicates rather depressing conclusions. Much is being put out that is inaccurate in this or that particular point, depending upon the source of the alleged information. Many of the subjects discussed and conclusions drawn for the alleged benefit of the public are controversial even among physicians themselves. The result is that, if one collects the press clippings, the "release stuff," the text-books and brochures of all sorts that are being put out upon some phases of the question, he can find just as great a variety of opinions as those already existing in the minds of the public. In other words, we are not clarifying public opinion at all, but actually confounding the confusion that already exists.

On the other hand, some of the educational material, and particularly that which is given out in an impersonal way, is accurate, reliable, well digested, and well presented. It is unfortunate that this class constitutes only a small fraction of the other kind.

In addition to the confusion that is being confounded by the inaccuracies and general character of much of the medical educational literature, we have the lack of sufficient knowledge among the "educators." It, of course, should be obvious that a teacher in the field of public health and medicine, regardless of who is being taught, must first himself have sufficient knowledge of the subject he is teaching to present it clearly and accurately. It probably would not be an overstatement to say that not one out of a hundred of those "informing" the public upon medical and health subjects knows what he or she is talking about. We thus have another explanation as to why the general public is confused about even the simplest subjects of medicine and public health.

This also accounts, to a very remarkable degree, for the prosperity of quackery of one sort or another at the present time—a prosperity never before seen in the history of the world. Our modern medical frauds are no different in their fundamental operation from those of earlier times. Cultists and quacks rely upon the ignorance and superstition of the people they propose to serve. Inaccuracies and confusion in supposedly authentic "educational material" and the lack of education of the instructors themselves, as shown by examination of their sayings, give to quacks chances which they never before had.

Another danger in this situation, which has been pointed out recently by many thoughtful writers, is that the controversial points in public health and medicine, as well as the froth and more or less immaterial points, are receiving the maximum amount of attention, while the essential and major subjects are being neglected or relegated to places of secondary importance. Questions like vaccination against smallpox, inoculation against diphtheria, pure water and air, and food supplies, general sanitary conditions, exterminating disease-bearing insects, and many other fundamental problems, are receiving scant attention; whereas propaganda as to the use of monkey glands, cancer specifics, tuberculosis spe-

cifics, and similar movements, receive tomes of publicity and dogmatic conclusions from ignorant or commercially interested persons.

Finally, the worst feature of all is the personal puffery that is being put out by certain doctors, groups, and clinics for their own aggrandizement and the promotion of persons toward which the propaganda directs the arrow. The great injury of this sort of unethical puffery is being more and more felt by conscientious physicians, and they resent it for themselves and because it detracts from public confidence in the profession as a whole. The editor of this Journal receives many letters from physicians criticizing the conduct of some physicians, clinics and organizations for this type of propaganda, and if the feeling in the hearts of the majority of good physicians were known to some of these personal puffers it might cause them at least to use more subtle means of self-advertisement and self-aggrandizement.

Some of these doctors come out boldly under their own names and often with their photographs, while others hide their heads in a clinic or some other organization and imagine that their real motives will not be understood. Brothers, it takes a great deal more subtlety than some of you are using to fool the general public—much less physicians.

SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY APPROVES ADULT HEALTH CENTER FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MEDICAL SCHOOL

The Out-Patient Department of the University of California Medical School and Hospitals has established an "Adult Health Center" for the "periodic examination of apparently normal individuals." This movement, as explained in the following outline of policy, was presented to the board of directors of the San Francisco County Medical Society at its meeting on October 9, and approved by them for the county society:

Adult Health Center, University of California Medical School

The Out-Patient Department of the University of California Hospital is establishing, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Medicine, an Adult Health Center for the periodic examination of apparently normal individuals. The purposes are: (1) To detect early disease processes, faulty hygiene or other conditions which, if not corrected, may result in impaired health; and (2) to educate the medical student in normal variations in health and early symptoms and signs of disease.

The Adult Health Center will examine indigents or those of small means who are unable to pay for the services of a physician. The fee will be \$1, to include an examination of urine, stool, blood, Wassermann, and vaccination for smallpox. Applicants who are found ineligible for the examination by reason of ability to pay, will be referred to their family physician.

The examination offers no special problem, and is one that any physician may undertake in his private office. Emphasis will be placed on corrective measures when defects are noted. Physicians will be welcome.

The Adult Health Center will extend the work which has been going on for years in the Department of Pediatrics and Obstetrics of this and other medical schools, to the adult group in the Department of Medicine. Such work has